

To: Peterson, Cynthia[Peterson.Cynthia@epa.gov]
From: Wharton, Steve
Sent: Thur 8/20/2015 2:59:39 PM
Subject: Re: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!
[piggottcommentsResponsesforapQuestions_srw_150814.docx](#)

Cynthia - Here are my draft responses from the questions we received from AP on 8/14. This version includes Amelia Piggott's comments.

I'm pretty certain that we did release the edited version to AP. Either Amelia or perhaps Libby may have that email.

Thanks,
Steve

From: Peterson, Cynthia
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 8:47 AM
To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Russell, Carol
Cc: Schmittziel, Paula; Fagen, Elizabeth; Wall, Dan; Forrest, Sabrina; Wharton, Steve
Subject: RE: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!

I just spoke with Steve Wharton, and he had drafted answers to some of these questions already. He is going to send the document to me, and I will share it with everyone.

Cynthia Peterson
Community Involvement Coordinator
Public Affairs and Community Involvement
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII
1595 Wynkoop St. (8OC-PAI)
Denver, CO 80202-1129
303-312-6879 -- direct dial

From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 8:34 AM
To: Peterson, Cynthia; Russell, Carol
Cc: Schmittziel, Paula; Fagen, Elizabeth; Wall, Dan; Forrest, Sabrina

Subject: RE: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!

Thanks Cynthia! And thank you all of you for your help on this.

Maybe we can knock it out today?!

By the way – we are WAY behind on this press inquiry from AP – it got lost between JIC, HQ and us and some of it festered, unanswered for a week so we're really trying hard to get it out today as early as possible.

Thanks again.

Lisa

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

Public Affairs Specialist/Media Officer

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From: Peterson, Cynthia

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 8:25 AM

To: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Russell, Carol

Cc: Schmittiel, Paula; Fagen, Elizabeth; Wall, Dan; Forrest, Sabrina

Subject: RE: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!

Lisa.

Here are my thoughts on who can answer various questions. I've copied these folks in case they want to weigh in or disagree with me.

Question 3. Paula Schmittdiel and Liz Fagen

Question 7. Paula Schmittdiel and Liz Fagen

Question 10. Dan Wall

Question 14. This is pretty speculative, but Paula Schmittdiel and Liz Fagen.

Question 16. Sabrina Forrest

Question 18. It might be a good idea to find out who from EPA provided the information quoted. Paula Schmittdiel has been working on this.

Cynthia Peterson

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From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa

Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 7:57 AM

To: Peterson, Cynthia; Russell, Carol

Cc: Schmittziel, Paula

Subject: FW: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!

Trying to get my list right!

Yesterday Paula helped me pull together answers to several questions. Now we have more!
See below. Any help you can offer is much appreciated!

Lisa

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

Public Affairs Specialist/Media Officer

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From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa

Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 9:20 PM

To: Williams, Laura; Murray, Bill; Schmittziel, Paula; Wharton, Steve; Stavnes, Sandra; Hestmark, Martin; Card, Joan

Cc: Urdiales, Aaron; Smith, Paula; Mylott, Richard; Jenkins, Laura Flynn

Subject: ACTION ASAP: AP questions requiring your assistance PLEASE!

All – We have a big list of questions from AP that I will need help addressing. Thank you for all the work on responses to Epoch Times and WSJ inquiries! Unfortunately, none of those questions fully answer these. You'll see how I've divided them up between JIC in Durango, here in the region and HQ. (correct me if I'm wrong on who I've assigned it to).

Laura Williams is our bridge to the JIC.

If any of you have answers right off the bat, please cc everyone.

Thank you for your help!!

1. Please provide baseline data that's being used to support EPAs statements that "sediment sample concentrations are trending toward pre-event conditions" Please provide this information for multiple locations, including the Durango area or vicinity, the Farmington area or vicinity, and Lake Powell.

In Progress w/HQ EOC/JIC

2. The EPA has built four containment ponds to clean and then discharge continuing runoff from the mine. How long does the EPA expect those containment ponds to remain in place? What other work at the site of the spill is under consideration immediately?

JIC Durango

3. Is additional work planned for any nearby mines that are interrelated with Gold King? Please provide names of those mines, what work is being considered and any timeline for when it will be conducted.

R8

4. What long-term plans for stopping the flow of wastewater from Gold King are under consideration?

JIC Durango

5. what is the cost estimate for long term-remediation for Gold King (or the Gold King area including other mines)?

JIC Durango?

6. Can the EPA provide an estimate of the cost of its response to the spill to date? Has the EPA set aside any money to deal with this accident on an ongoing basis?

JIC Durango?

7. We were told by Bureau of Land Management that the EPA maintains a database of mines on non-public lands. Can you provide me with an electronic copy of this dataset, preferably in an Excel or comparable file, along with a data dictionary that explains each field and records contained in it?

R8?

8. Please provide further details on the Administrator's order from last week to cease work on field investigations at other mine sites. Without some context, the order doesn't mean too much to us: how many mine sites will be impacted? Where? Does the order apply to cleanup work that is ongoing or simply investigative work that would come before a cleanup?

HQ EOC

9. How likely are the contaminants to re-mobilize? How long will this remain a potential problem?

JIC Durango

10. Mines have been leaking contamination into some of these rivers for many years; will the Gold King spill appreciably increase the contamination load in the sediments for the Animas, San Juan or other water bodies?

R8?

11. If the contaminants do re-mobilize, what are the chances that they will pose enough of a threat to prompt more drinking water advisories, closing of rivers, etc?

(we have a partial response stating that any additional events would be smaller in scale, but would appreciate more detail)

JIC Durango

12. Are there any plans to try to remove contamination from sediment? Is that even possible?

JIC Durango

13. or analytes listed in the tables of data results (including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, iron, barium, etc) can you please provide corresponding EPA water quality criteria?

JIC Durango?

14. had Gold King Mine been designated a Superfund site, what would have been the chances of the spill happening?

R8?

15. how many mines are currently on the National Priorities List? Can we get a list of those or is there a way to search on the Superfund website?
HQ-OSWER?

16. Is there a gauge of how often resistance to a Superfund designation by local officials has prevented a site's listing?
HQ OSWER?

17. Was a preliminary assessment ever completed on the Gold King Mine or for a group of mines including Gold King?

R8

18. it's my understanding that the EPA has said a water treatment plant estimated to cost \$12-\$17m (and \$1M a year to operate) would be able to clean the water in the Animas. Is that correct? And if so, is it the type of expense that Superfund would cover?

R8

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

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